Seconds spilling out

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Summary

June 11 - “We’re out of time” | Firearm | Self Defense |

Notes

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The system was proving more difficult to break into than Adam had anticipated. That would have been fine, because he built buffers into all of his projects, except that he had to be on site to break into this particular system, because it was closed, and this site was filled with men with guns who did not want them there.

Nigel was moving between the room he was in and the hallway, looking agitated and making enough noise to distract Adam. His boots scraped against the floorboards every time he took the corner to check on Adam, and he'd checked five times now.

The scrape of boots, Adam would remind him about wear patterns and treads later, and Nigel was back at his shoulder, glaring at the screen.

"Done yet, gorgeous?"

Adam frowned, trying to focus on the program. It was nearly done, and he told Nigel so, but would need at least fifteen minutes to finish getting in and drop everything he needed to in their data banks. If done correctly, it would corrupt everything in their system, and dump enough malware into anything that tried to connect with their system to render every electronic they had useless, all the while stealing all of their information, from buyers to contacts to blackmail. It was very effective, if given enough time.

The 'enough time' seemed to be a problem.

Adam flinched at the loud thud from down the hall. It sounded like something heavy being thrown at the door Nigel had barricaded. Nigel cursed, glancing again at Adam before running from the room. The barricade would hold for five to ten minutes, unless they had something that could break down the door easily. Adam had seen something like that in one of the tv shows that Nigel liked, it was a big black tube thing that would swing at the door and shatter it. Adam hoped they didn't have one of those, because then they definitely wouldn't have enough time to finish.

Ten minutes left. Eight. He could hear the door creaking, and occasional scattered bangs of gunfire as Nigel tried to discourage them, or they tried to shoot Nigel. Six, and the door shattered, and then there was more gunfire and more yelling.

Adam glanced at the gun Nigel had insisted he bring. He didn't like them, they were too loud and burned his hands on the recoil, but Nigel said he needed one for protection. He had taught Adam how to use it. He hoped he didn't have to use it anytime soon, he hoped no one but Nigel would come down the hall.

The gunfire stopped, replaced with groans of pain that were cut off by single pops of a gun. Then Nigel was back in the room, panting and clutching his side.

"We're out of time, darling. They called in reinforcements, we need to be gone." There was blood on his fingers, soaking out from between them where he held his side.

Adam frowned, fingers twitching, and reached for Nigel's side.

“You’re injured.”

Nigel threw him a pained grin, more grimace, and reloaded his gun. Adam was bad at emotions in general, but he’d been getting better at telling Nigel’s apart. Pain was easier, it showed along his entire body, and often had a very visible cause. Adam didn’t like seeing Nigel in pain.

“Glancing shot, gorgeous. I’ll be fine, promise,” at that, Nigel pressed a kiss into Adam’s curls, eyes on the computer screen. Three minutes left.

“Do we have enough to leave?”

Adam shook his head. “No. That timer is how long it will take to get into their system, and get their information, and leave my traps, and erase the trail enough that even if they know we did it, they won’t be able to follow it back. If we leave it early, we’ll still have a trail, and my traps won’t set, and-“

“Alright, Adam. Then we’ll stay. I’ve survived worse before, yeah? Fuck them.”

Adam turned back to the computer. Nigel wouldn’t lie, but he was stressed, so Adam would try to work faster.

Two minutes, and the sound of boots on the stairs filled the air. It was a cacophony, echoing down the stairwell and repeating onto itself until it sounded like there was an army descending on them.

One minute. Nigel wanted to lock Adam inside the room and fight all of them, but Adam refused to let him. If Nigel tried to do that, Adam would shut down the program and follow him out. He wasn’t going to die for him, not today and not ever, he told Nigel. So they locked the door with both of them inside, and waited.

They watched the seconds tick down together, as the footsteps reached them and the door started shaking from the force of their attacks. Forty seconds. Thirty.

Ten, and they were shooting through the door. Nigel shoved Adam into a corner, as out of the way of gunfire as he could get, still clutching his computer, and returned fire.

Five, and the men outside the door were dying, shot through by Nigel.

Two seconds, and then one, and then it beeped, the little sound Adam had programmed in to tell him when it was done.

They still didn’t have a way out. They had done it, they had what they needed, and they couldn’t get out.

Without the computer to focus on, the sounds of gunfire seemed louder. The smell of gunpowder and sweat and blood were thick in the air. The carpet he was curled on was scratchy, and that shouldn’t have mattered with everything else, but it did and it was scratchy and bad and he wanted to be at home, where it was quiet and calm and they were both safe.

Nigel groaned again, and Adam's eyes shot to him, scanning for any new injury. His arm was bleeding now, and Adam wasn't sure how bad it was from here.

He didn't want to watch Nigel die. The door was still breaking, and Nigel was closer to the door than Adam and more of a threat, so when they broke in they would kill him first and Adam couldn't watch him die.

So he picked up the gun Nigel gave him, and crawled out of his corner.

He could see flashes of people through the cracks in the door, and aimed for them, pulling the trigger again and again and again until it clicked, empty. Nigel was a good teacher, because the flashes disappeared when he shot at them. If they made any sound, Adam didn't hear it over the roar in his ears, blood pounding. He kept pulling the trigger, hearing the click of the empty gun only distantly, tinny and far away.

Click. Click. Click. Over and over, still pointed at the door.

Something touched his arm and he flinched, his entire body moving with the shock of the touch. The gun fell from his hands, fingers stiff. Nigel was grabbing him, holding him close to his chest. Adam's face was wet, and he didn't understand why, and Nigel was talking to him, but he sounded too far away to understand.

His voice came into focus slowly, deep and comforting. He was saying something about doing a good job, and about needing to leave, now. Then they were moving, Nigel leading him through the building, around the piles of bodies he'd made, they'd made, now. It was still dark outside, and that struck Adam as incredibly strange. More time should have passed, for all that had happened. Days should have gone by, weeks, for how long that timer took to count down.

The air was cold, chilled. Winter was close. They'd made it out. They'd completed their task, and succeeded. Nigel had kept his promise. Adam had killed someone, maybe multiple someone's. He wasn't sure, didn't know, and it felt like a hammer pounding into his brain. He'd killed a person, or people, and he didn't even know how many. He hadn't looked when Nigel had led him out, he hadn't seen any faces through the door.

He didn't want to be a killer. That was- bad. It was wrong, and bad, and Adam wanted to claw his own skin off at the thought. Then Nigel's arms were around him again, and he remembered why he had done it. Being a killer was better than being without Nigel, better than watching Nigel die. He'd hated it, and wanted to go home and shower and wash the feeling of dirtiness, of death, off of his skin, but he'd do it again to keep Nigel.

Nigel was talking again, soothing and low, a steady stream of reassurances and nicknames. His hands were on Adam, solid and warm.

Nigel was alive, and Adam was alive, and they were together. That was worth the entire world.

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